

International Tribunal on Violations of Human Rights of Political/POW Prisoners in the US

On December 7-10, 1990, a group of concerned organizations and individuals in the U.S. and Puerto Rico pledged themselves to bring to the attention of the North American and international communities, the human rights violations which are routinely perpetrated by the U.S. government against these prisoners. They joined forces to organize consciousness-raising activities on the issue. The culmination of this process was a Human Rights Conference whose principal activity was to present evidence to a Special International Tribunal regarding the persistent violations of human rights by the U.S.A. against political/POW prisoners in this country.

The Human Rights Conference and its Special International Tribunal convened at Hunter College in New York City from December 7-10, 1990. A distinguished panel of international jurists and individuals concerned with human rights, were invited to participate as judges and pass judgment on evidence presented to them on violations of human rights of political prisoners in the U.S. Already, nine persons accepted our intention to be judges: three from Europe and one each from Africa, the far east, Latin America, the middle east, and North America.

The evidence was principally testimonial and included representations from Black/New Afrikans, Indigenous Americans, Mexicans, North American anti-imperialists and anti-war advocates, and Puerto Ricans.

A group of experts was called to testify on prison conditions in general, on Marion Prison in Illinois, and prison control units in particular. Other experts testified on the political bias of disparate sentencing; treatment of prisoners, including the psychological effects of isolation; violations of trial procedures; and the international legal basis of prisoners behavior in furthering of their struggles. Additionally, a group of former political prisoners have been invited to address the Tribunal. Finally, written and video-graphic documentation submitted by the prisoners was made available to the panel of judges.

keywords:

US political prisoners, prisoners of war, black liberation movement, puerto rican independence movement, chicano movement, colonialism, anti-imperialism, international law

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